

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,
River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)**

Subregion: EAST **Counties:** INYO and MONO

Applicant: STUDENT CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

Project Title: INYO FOREST RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION PROJECT

Reference Number: SNC 070005

PROJECT SCOPE

This project will restore specific sites in order to minimize soil bank erosion and excessive runoff into seven creeks which are tributaries to the Owens River, while supporting sustainable off-highway vehicle (OHV) use. The restoration of these sites will support the collaborative efforts that the Student Conservation Association has established with the U.S. Forest Service and OHV Commission in other areas of the Sierra with similar conditions. The watershed restoration projects included in this grant provide an opportunity to demonstrate that non-profit organizations can support the Forest Service with public stewardship of public forest land. This project currently has \$94,395 in matching funds and in-kind services from U.S. Forest Service, the Off Road Vehicle Commission, and student volunteers.

The sites to be restored are impacting the water quality of the following adjacent creeks:

- Glass Creek
- Deadman Creek
- Parker Creek
- Rush Creek
- Walker Creek
- Sawmill Creek
- Olancho Creek

Steps critical to a successful project include:

- Restoring 4.7 miles of illegal trail spurs near Mammoth Lakes by eliminating multiple trails and establishing one sustainable trail for continued motorized and non-motorized recreation and public access and restoring four illegal roads and four spur roads entering the Golden Trout Wilderness by:
 - Utilizing native materials, such as boulders and logs, to block illegal trails
 - Sub-soiling, grading, and raking soils to disguise the areas
 - Applying vertical mulch and revegetation to restore habitat and control soil erosion and excessive runoff
- Placing educational signs explaining need to stay on roads and the purposes of the restoration project;
- Monitoring both sites for effectiveness of restoration efforts by establishing photo points and providing before and after photos of the restoration sites;
- In the final report, providing an explanation of techniques used and the plan for long-term sustainability of the project;
- Providing progress reports to the Conservancy every six months for the project duration, and a final performance report on the project once completed.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Recruit and hire intern and project leader	April 2008-July 2008
Establish photo points and take pre-restoration photographs	April 2008 – May 2008
Utilize native materials from the field to implement restoration on Mammoth Lake sites	May 2008 – September 2008
Place educational signage along main roads	September 2008
Complete and submit six-month progress reports to SNC	October 2008
Utilize native materials from the field to implement restoration on West Olancho, Inyo site	–October 2008 – March 2009
Complete and submit twelve-month progress report to SNC	April 2009
Begin effectiveness monitoring on sites in both Inyo/Mono	April 2009 – September 2009
Take post-project photographs from established photo-points for inclusion in final report	September 2009
Final Report/Final Payment Request	December 2009

PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Conservation Intern Stipends	\$26,850
Project Leader Stipend	14,710
Intern Housing, Utilities, Phone	4,000
Intern Training, Orientation, Field Equipment, Supplies, Technology	12,000
Project Administration	440
GRAND TOTAL	\$58,000

Letters of Support: None submitted.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends authorization of this grant for the requested \$58,000.

2. Project Summary: Inyo Forest Restoration and Conservation Project:

The Eastern Sierra is a dramatic landscape encompassing a breath-taking array of wildlands, natural resources, and a topography shaped by weather, wind, rain, snow, and immeasurable geologic and tectonic. At the heart of the region lies the 2.1 million-acre Inyo National Forest -- an outdoor playground providing opportunities for a wide variety of recreational activities including hiking, horseback riding, backpacking, camping, cross country and downhill skiing, wildlife viewing, fishing, hunting, off highway vehicles, and snowmobiles. It is not uncommon for the forest to receive over three million visitor days every year. Without question, the Inyo National Forest is inextricably linked to the custom, culture, and economy of the Eastern Sierra.

That landscape, along with its custom and culture, is an increasing need for a management framework of stewardship, focused on maintaining economic and ecological sustainability in the region. Within that framework, landscape and watershed restoration efforts are vital, as there are acute restoration needs throughout the forest to correct and reverse the impacts of various recreational activities, particularly off highway vehicles. At the same time, restoration efforts and site improvement efforts focused on motorized and non-motorized trail systems on the forest must be designed to provide sustainable public access and recreation of all types.

Accordingly, the Student Conservation Association will work in partnership with the Forest Service/Inyo National Forest based in Bishop, California to undertake a forest watershed restoration project on the Inyo National Forest in Mono and Inyo Counties. SCA is well situated to undertake this project and already has a rich partnership in place with the Inyo National Forest. For example, in 2005, the value of SCA's conservation service on the Inyo was valued at \$551,000 by the Forest Service -- more than any non-profit organization active on the forest. The total cost of the project is just over \$152,000. A grant of \$58,000 is requested from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

The Inyo Forest Restoration and Conservation Project includes watershed restoration and site improvement components. The project will focus on watershed restoration, reducing soil erosion, improving water quality, promoting sustainable OHV recreation, and OHV route removal and restoration. **Specifically, a total of 62 illegal OHV routes and roads will be removed and reclaimed, resulting in the restoration of 12 acres of land.** The project also incorporates community outreach components, as the SCA Restoration Team will coordinate its activities at the Mammoth Lakes project sites with volunteer efforts of Friends of the Inyo, a non-profit organization based in Bishop, California. The project will focus on the following sites on the Mammoth Lakes and Mt. Whitney Ranger Districts:

1. Trails between Crestview Rest Area and Deadman Creek.
2. Along the Mammoth Scenic Loop Road north of the Highway 203 junction.
3. Shady Rest Park area along the Sawmill Ridge north of Mammoth Lakes.
4. Casa Diablo Hot Springs near the Geothermal Energy Development area.
5. West Olancha on the eastern edge of the Golden Trout Wilderness.